

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7842

INFO COMUSFORAZ LAJES

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 4732

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4

TAGS: PINT, ELAB, PO

SUBJECT: SECRETARY OF STATE MARCELO CURTO TO BE NEW
LABOR MINISTER

1. CURTO TOLD LABATT JULY 14 THAT MARIO SOARES HAD NAMED HIS GOVERNMENT AND ALL POSTS HAD BEEN FILLED. CURTO IS TO BE MINISTER OF LABOR. CURTO COMMENTED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WILL "BE EVEN MORE SOCIALIST THAN ORIGINALLY THOUGHT" AS IT WILL INCLUDE EVERY FEW INDEPENDENTS AND MILITARY. MOST DIFFICULT POSTS TO FILL WERE THOSE OF MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND MINISTRY OF LABOR. CURTO INDICATED HE DID NOT WISH POST AND ACCEPTED "ONLY OUT OF LOYALTY TO PARTY."

2. COMMENTS: CURTO HAS BEEN TOUTED OFF AND ON AS A LIKELY CANDIDATE FOR THE LABOR MINISTRY. HE IS OBVIOUSLY PLEASED WITH THE PROSPECT.

3. SEMI-CONFIRMATION OF CURTO'S NOMINATION MAY BE HAD FROM THE FACT THAT MINISTER OF LABOR TOMAS ROSA TOLD LABATT JULY 14 HE HAS NOT BEEN CONTACTED BY SOARES TO SERVE IN THE NEW GOVERNMENT. ROSA IS DISGRUNTLED AND UNHAPPY WITH BEING PASSED OVER FOR A NEW POST AFTER HIS IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE SIXTH PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT.

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ROSA HINTED THAT HE AND OTHER MILITARY OFFICERS WHO SHARE

HIS VIEWS WILL BE WATCHING THE NEW SOCIALIST GOVERNMENT WITH A CRITICAL EYE TO SEE THAT IT DOES NOT SWERVE TO THE LEFT TOWARD COLLABORATION WITH THE PCP. ROSA CRITICIZED SOARES FOR THE LONG DELAY IN GETTING A PROGRAM OF GOVERNMENT UNDERWAY AND OBSERVED THAT THE COUNTRY CANNOT AFFORD TO WASTE MUCH MORE TIME BEFORE TAKING THE MEASURES NECESSARY TO SAVE THE ECONOMY. RELATIONS BETWEEN CURTO AND ROSA HAVE NOT BEEN CORDIAL LATELY. CURTO'S APPOINTMENT TO REPLACE ROSA IN A JOB WHERE ROSA FEELS A VESTED INTEREST WILL NOT SIT WELL.

4. CURTO'S APPOINTMENT IS NOT ONE WHICH WILL INSPIRE CONFIDENCE AMONG THE FOREIGN BUSINESS COMMUNITY. WHILE CURTO HAS ALWAYS BEEN PERSONALLY FRIENDLY TO THE EMBASSY HIS POLITICAL POSTURE WITHIN THE SOCIALIST PARTY HAS BEEN ERRATIC. HIS APPOINTMENT IS ALSO RATHER SURPRISING IN VIEW OF SOARES'S EARLIER ACKNOWLEDGEMENT TO THE AMBASSADOR THAT CURTO IS A DIFFICULT PERSON WITH WHOM TO WORK. LABOR WILL BE A KEY POST FOR THE SOARES GOVERNMENT AND THE APPOINTMENT OF CURTO IS NOT AN OPTIMISTIC OMEN.
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